REMARKS

Claims 7-12 and 14-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamashita et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,140,418). In response, Applicant amended claims 7 and 14 to clarify that the powdered material applied to a surface is spray coated with a sealing material to the inner surface of pneumatic tire, and respectfully traverse the rejection based on this amendment.

The Examiner asserts on page 2, under item 5 of the outstanding Office Action that Applicant has not recited in the claims the spray-coated feature of the present invention. Accordingly, Applicant amended the claims to recite this feature. The Examiner further asserts under item 6 of the outstanding Office Action that one of ordinary skill would be motivated to apply the sealing material disclosed in Yamashita to an inner surface of a pneumatic tire based on the properties of the sealing material. Applicant respectfully traverses this statement of the Examiner for the following reasons.

First, the composition of the material in Yamashita is such that the material is created by pulverizing a crosslinked rubber (B) by cooling it in a material, for example liquid nitrogen, and thereafter, melt-mixing the pulverized crosslinked rubber (B) as a raw material with a block copolymer (A). Thus, Yamashita merely shows that a sealing material is prepared by melt-molding or melt-forming the obtained composition.

More specifically, Yamashita has a powered material as raw material melt-mixed with the block copolymer (A) to produce a thermoplastic polymer composition. The thermoplastic polymer composition forms hermetic sealing materials by melt-molding or forming of the composition. Examples of forming the composition include inject molding, extrusion molding and blow molding. However, Yamashita is silent regarding spray-coating of the

powdered material of the cooling-pulverized crosslinked rubber (B) as a sealing material on an inner surface of a pneumatic tire, as now recited in amended claim 7 of the present Application.

Furthermore, Yamashita fails to disclose or suggest a powdered material of the cooling-pulverized crosslinked rubber (B) having a viscosity of 20 to 200 Pa · s/100°C. Since Yamashita fails to disclose or suggest the viscosity range, it is not possible to form a uniform coating surface discussed in Applicant's Specification in paragraph [0014]. For these reasons, withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of claims 7-12 and 14-15 is respectfully requested.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,
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